

# Duxbury Early Settlers: Palmer

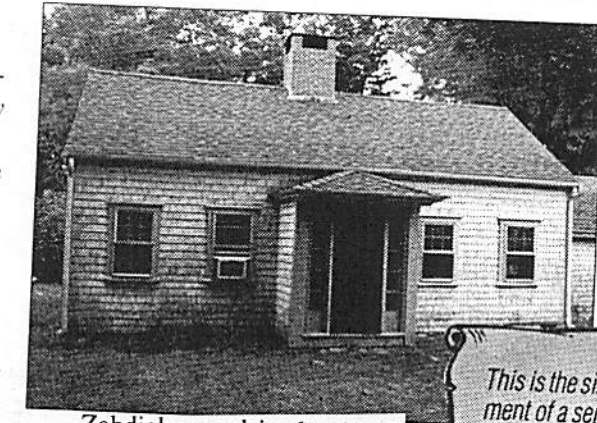
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SPECIAL TO THE CLIPPER

[See last week's Clipper for part one of this story -Ed.].

Elizabeth Partridge married William Kemp in 1638 and when he died three years later she inherited half of the Prentice farm on Soule Avenue. She then married Thomas Thacher. Her sons Isaac and Rodolphus (Ralph) Thacher were both living on the Latham farm (located just south of the Partridge farm) and Ralph ended up inheriting the Partridge farm.

The next owner of the Palmer farm was John Robinson who bought it from Ralph Thacher in 1703. Both of these men were ministers and Ralph Thacher, after 20 years of farming, moved to Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard in 1689 where he served the island parish.

John Robinson sold the farm to Robert Stanford in 1739 and he in turn left it to his son Joshua in 1757. On October 8, 1778 Joshua Stanford sold the property to Zabdiel Weston, a cousin of Ezra Weston (King Caesar).



The grey cape at 167 Depot St. (across the street in the woods) is owned by Jackie and F. Michael Dewire, III.

*This is the sixth installment of a series of articles about Duxbury's early settlers, using land records and other historical documents.*

Zabdiel served in the Continental Army during the Revolution, although he saw little, if any, action. He was married twice, first to Hannah Curtis in 1769 and then to Lydia Churchill in 1798. Zabdiel and Hannah had four children Sylvanus, Elkanah, Olive, and Wealthea. During the 1790s and early 1800s Zabdiel sold off several small parcels near the water on what is now Shipyard Lane. He also sold off property on the "New Street," which was later named Washington Street in honor of our first President who had recently finished his second term in office. Zabdiel profited well from the need for the shipbuilders to have a street serving the booming industry – right place at the right time! Zabdiel died in July of 1805. He divided the farm into several smaller parcels and left them to his children, the bulk of the property going to his son Elkanah.

Strangely, although this farm was 65 acres during the ownership of the Partridge-Thacher family for over 50 years, it was never again to be in its original shape and area. After the Stanford, Weston ownerships several larger tracts were reassembled by George H. Stearns and Capt. George P. (Partridge) Richardson, who were descendants of the Partridges. These properties were later called the "Stearns Farm"

and the Rebecca Ames property. This all happened in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and it brings into question whether Partridge Road was named after the much respected Rev. Ralph or the Partridge descendents (who were most likely descendents of George Partridge) being rightfully proud of the family name.

Other street names in the area include Shipyard Lane, which was where Nathaniel and Joshua Cushing had their shipyard. South Station Street was the location of the South Duxbury Station on the Duxbury and Cohasset Railroad Co. line (Old Colony Railroad.) established in 1846. I'm sure that Amos Sampson was a much respected man for somebody to name a street after him. I did find an entry in King Caesar's record book in which he seems to spell only phonetically. Amos Sampson was the first "Detter" (pre-Revolutionary period) that appears on the books, charged with several pounds of "terbacker" at 2s per pound, also for "cutting a cote, 1 shillin," several pounds "of Cofey at 1s, 4p," which he paid for by "butcherin sundry catel, and sheerin six sheep at 1s, 6p each." Maybe this is not the Amos we are looking for!

Josselyn Avenue may be named for John Josselyn an early settler on this property or for his family which was mostly located on the property just to the south of William Palmer. As to the naming of "Wicked Hill," I hope it is because it's so steep!

There are two houses of historical significance within the limits of William Palmer's grant. One of these houses, located at 167 Depot St. currently owned by Jackie and F. Michael Dewire, III is in the southwest corner of the property on the west side of the abandoned Old Colony Railroad Line, north of the Duxbury Clipper office. According to the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society the house was built in 1744 by Amos Sampson. When the railroad came right by their front door around 1850, the owners at the time would wave at, and talk to, the passengers. Anything to

break up the day. Another story, about one of the people in the house, was with coffee in hand, jumping aboard as the train slowed down at the curve.

The other house currently owned by John and Julie True-love, located at 47 Partridge Road, is also a story of movement - the house was moved from another part of town. This could have been in the era of Zabdiel Weston's ownership or, more likely, when Capt. George P. Richardson owned the property. They both had the wherewithal to accomplish this, but Mr. Richardson had the added incentive of cementing everything "Partridge" about the property. As Paul Harvey used to say on radio and TV "...and the rest of the story is..." that the house, believed to be about 250 years old, came from another piece of property owned by the Rev. Ralph Partridge.